11/14/90

Dear Dave,

I'm sorry you, Gerry and Jerry (who has a bad knee) could not have been here yesterday to enjoy my two surpise visitors, two now middle-aged anti-Castroites who figure in the official investigations of the JFK assassination, Jerry Patrick Hemming and Roy Hargraves. Hemming phoned from the AARC offices in DC yesterday morning to ask if they could come, I asked him to use pencil and paper and write the directions down, and believe it or not, he did, he got off the expressway at the correct exit and then got lost making only the two turns required to get here. Driving a not inexpensive and new van.

It seems they are working for Bud Fensterwald and his assassinations Archives and Research Center on the Ricky White concoction that his father, Roscoe, was one of JFK's assassins. Trying, as they correctly understand Bud's attitude, to prove that this fairy tale is or can be true - after all that has come to light and all that I've told Bud that proves it isn't and can't be true! They understand that Bud is a true believer, that Jim Lesar tends to agree with him and feel as he does, that Kevin Walsh is troubled by it in ways they can't identify, and that Mark Allen is openly skeptical.

It was not easy to present to them the disproofs that I have because Hemming wanted to recall his past and the people he met and what he then was doing and tended to monopolize, but Hargraves did make some notes. I gave them the items of disproof of the details of this concoction and the titles of the books that were plagiarized. They had seen a copy of the novel, Promises to Keep, at the AARC offices and had a copy of Popkin's with them, The Second Oswald.

Hemming seems not to have aged as much as I'd have expected from the kind of life he leads but his 6'6" body now bulges at the belly more than mine does and Hargraves puffs out a bit there. I last saw Hemming 22 yrars ago and I'd never seen Hargraves before. He surprised me, however, by quoting the Robert Frost poem from which the novel gets its title, Promises To Keep.

Hemming, who has detested Hall for Years, Loran Hall, that is, confirmed what one of my Baltimore police friends (who'd been here earlier in the day and through lunch with his girl friend) told me, that Hall and his son had been arrested in Oklahoma selling some kind of dope pills to raise money for the Contras and were in jail for it.

I was curious about some of the story Hall had given me on a number of occasions, for the first time in three days of interviews of him when he was in real pain from an illnesss I do not recall in a Veteran's administration hospital in Los angeles, the hospital that was destroyed later in an earthquake, at lest more than a decade agoo He does confirm part of Hall's story, that Castro had him jailed with Santos Trafficante. My recollection is that Hall said in the same cell. Hemming, who says he then visited Hall during his detention in what he says had been a mental hospital, says Hall was in the cell next to it but that he was permitted to share the food the mafia boss was able to have sent in.

Not that any of their pasts is relevant to the JFK assassination, although it did figure in the investigations. With regard to the one real link, of the men who appeared at Sylvia Odio's apartment in Dallas just before the assassination with one presented to her as Leon Oswald, who said JFK should be killed and he would show them how, both disagree with the account that one was Hall. They seem to have had some kind of connection with the Christic Institute and that suit against the CIA over the bombing that was to have killed Eden Pastore for the Contras and instead wounded the correspondent Tony Avirgnan and others. They claim that, in Hemming's word, which is not easy to accept without confirmation, they are 99% sure that the man they think was at Odio's is the man who was responsible for that bombing.

I made no effort to make notes and I think it is not the significance of our conversation that would have interested you but what these men said about their pasts

and those of other now middle-aged soldiers of fortune. I teased Hemming a bit about some of this and those we spoke about, like Robert K. Brown, publisher of Soldier of Fortune magazine, They see each other often so I asked him to tell Brown that he still owes me a Colorado double-bladed axe, not that I can now use it. He says that the court decision against Brown and his magazine was reversed on appeal. If you do not remember, he was sued because someone responding to an ad in the magazine killed someone for the person who responded to that ad. and if you have forgotten Brown's link with the JFK investigation, he had been offered a large sum of money by a southern California Arab dentist to kill JFK and thousands of members of Americans for Democratic Action and if I recall correctly, Jews, and had not reported this to the FBI. To which he later confirmed it when a student to whom he'd blabbed that story did tell the FBI.

When I kidded Hemming about his open planning of a hop-skip-and-jump invasion of Cuba via Haiti in my presence, Larry Howard of the JFK investigation with us in Hemming's El Monte apartment, and this included his phone conversations about it, his response was that while they did not get to invade Haiti, they had bombed the castle. He says that Howard Davis, who had been Raul Castro's personal pilot, flew the plane that did the bombing. Howie Davis is in the FBI records.

Hemming claims to have met Roscoe White in Dallas in 1962 and that under FOIA he has gotten FBI records that confirm this. I asked him for copies and he said he'd send them but if I get them I'll be surprised. He does acknowledge that that does not confirm Ricky White's story.

I don't know how they are financed but I think it is not entirely by Bud because they had just left there and here I had to direct them to the Western Union office where we waited for Hemming, who returned from it with the money he said had been waiting for him in Washington. From where we went to supper. Which was large for both. And I did noticed that Hemming did not leave a tip. I paid our share while they were still eating, at Carmack's, where you like the scrapple, and paid the tip at the same time, for our share.

(local) Hargraves surprised me not only because he quoted Frost but because of his interest in our history and even in old buildings and architecture. He expressed interest in the older local buildings past which I directed them and particular interest in the Hessian Barracks now part of the deaf and dumb school campus. (The next to the top man now lives in the part of it not used for storage and loves it from a story in the local paper.) This building dates to the Revolutionary War and Hessian tropps were housed in it, thus the name. Hargraves also was appreciative of the moving of the John Hanson house from the other side of West Patrick Street, brick for brick, and being rebuilt as part of the new county courthouse. Hargraves is better educatied and better read than Hemming and he again surprised me by his knowledge of the obscure novel I had been asked to read by a conservative friend, a Canticle for Leibowitz, as I thought it would, it interested them when I told them that the friend who loaned it to me is the brother-in-law of Miami's mayor, Suarez, one of the Cubans who have become prominent in Florida's political life.

They did talk quite a bit about the so-called training for an invasion of Cuba on No-Name Key. I asked Hargraves for his version of the death of one of them, Collins, from drowning when he was a skulled diver. It happened in shallow water and Hargraves says it was while Collins was drunk. He says that Collins made out well diving for tropical fish to sell but that he was the kind of drunk who got nasty whe drunk, and tended to wildnesss. This matter used to interest the earlier Nuts in the JFK case.

With regard to the Mannlicher-Carcanno rifle officaldom says Oswald used, it just happens that the Baltimore policeman, who teaches an assassinations course at a community college, had just that morning returned mine that he'd borrowed. Hemming then made graphic and detailed explanations to Hargraves of its many defects. He said that in those early anti-Castro days they had been offered a quantity of these rifles and refused to accept them, they were that bad, that dangerous. and he explained and demonstrated some of the hazards, one I recall that could put the shooter's eye out. They laughed and laughed about anyone even thinking that such a weapon would be used in such a job. Hemming did

say that Roscoe White had a quantity of them. I asked him what calibre, because I knew Ricky had specified 7.65 instead of 6.5, and he said it was 7.65.

Hargraves is not the braggard Hemming is and he didn't once raise his voice. I found myself wondering how he had become involved in those kinds of activites so long ago and had continued in them since then. Both seem to be working as investigators now. I did not ask them for any details on this other than the ostensible purpose of their visit. But in the course of our conversation, Hemming did confirm aspects of what Hall had told me of his transporting of weapons and other things from the west coat to Florida back in the 1963 months that are in the FBI reports. Lester Logue, a wealthy Dallas right-winger, did confirm that Hall had left a trailer load of this stuff in his Garage, as Hall had told me. I think but I'm not sure that was the time Hall was arrested with it after the JFK administration had begun to clamp down on those activities.

They had expected Jim and Mark Allen to still be working at 8 last night because they expected to speak to them then when they phoned. Instead they left a message for Jim on his naswering machine that they'd be in touch this morning. They stayed at the Masser motel because it is the old-fashioned kind, of individual cabins, and they wanted to have the van with what it held, particularly records, to be close to their room, for security reasons. I think also because they liked the rate of $34.00, which is so much less than they've been paying. They laughed about their first accomodations in the DC area because after they checked in they learned it was a black cat house. They did not find it of interest to them when I told them that where Western Union now is, at the truckers' truck-stop motel, has the reputation of also being a whorehouse. This is to say that they were not interested in women and sex but in the kind of accomodations they wanted for security and economy. Economy indicates that whoever is paying their expenses is not overly-generous with money. It makes me suspect that their interest in this involvement is not financial. They obviously had little money when they got here because they said they had to get the money at Western Union or they'd not have money for supper and the motel unless they did.

Although their connections at least of the past seem to have been with right-wingers and their anti-Communist pasts if not present seems to include them as right-wingers they spoke of right-wingers they named in a deprecating manner and seemed to be saying they they were not of such beliefs.

If Hemming was truthful, it seems that Jim Garrison tried to interest them in working for or with him. Hemming did say that some of those whose names came up in Garrison's talk, like Larry Laborde, had CIA connections, as contract agents. But they could not specify any reason for the CIA to use the likes of Roscie White as a contract agent. They could think of no service he could render as a contract agent. They had little knowledge of Joe West or Gary Shaw or the preacher named Shaw who is part of the White story and in general it is apparent that although they knew of Popkin's book and had seen the novel, Bud and Jim had not cued them in on the disproof of it that I gave them. They knew of the rupture between West and the Dallas center but not that West had continued to be connected with it through the Ricky White press conference it staged for him. In terms of their investigation, when I told them I had the AP wire copy on it they did not ask to see it. They did not know that Ricky's first ghost writer was the former Dallas cop Abshire who uses the pen-name Anderson and did not know, although Bud et all are well aware of it, that he put an outline of Ricky's story on paper. I did not tell them I had a copy but suggested they ought look him up when they are in Dallas again. I know that when Jim sent Kevin down to investigate because Jim doubted part of the story at the least, Kevin gave him an account of his interview of Anderson, the name in Kevin's report. So, I wonder what kind of investigation Bud et al really want when they keep this kind of disproof of what Ricky has been saying from their investigators.

My how these people waste their time and money!!! only to in the end magnify the destruction of all credibility by their nuttiness and the attention they get for it! These two seem to understand that Bud is anxious to break the case open and nothing else interests him. It did not seem to discourage them a bit. In haste this eearly morning, before I go out for the papers and then do my walking, with best to you all, Harry